

Michigan State Waterways Commission  
Minutes of August 8, 2008

Meeting Minutes of the Meeting of  
Michigan State Waterways Commission  
August 8, 2008

Port Austin Village Hall  
17 West State Street  
Port Austin, Michigan 48467

A regular meeting of the Michigan State Waterways Commission was called to order by Chairperson Carol Oakley at 10:50 a.m. on Friday, August 8, 2008, at the Port Austin Village Hall, Port Austin, Michigan. The following Commissioners were present:

Carol Oakley, Chairperson  
Bryan Amann  
Janet Mansfield

Commissioner Mike Bryanton participated by phone.

Commissioners Denny Bailey, Bob Brown, and Curtis Hertel Sr. were excused.

Parks and Recreation Chief Ron Olson and other Department of Natural Resources (Department) were present.

Chairperson Carol Oakley thanked the Village of Port Austin for hosting this meeting and allowing the Commission to utilize its facilities. She also thanked Mr. George Lauinger for his ability in managing the Port Austin State Dock. Chairperson Oakley then expressed appreciation to the Harbor Commission for their hospitality and to Dennis and Lynn Parsons for opening their home to the Commission and staff.

The Village President of Port Austin, Mr. Tony Loewe, thanked the Waterways Commission

The Port Austin Harbor Commission welcomed the Waterways Commission and DNR staff to the Port Austin area. The Harbor Commission serves Port Austin and Grindstone City.

Public Appearances:

**Written Correspondence**

There was no written correspondence.

### **Appearances (Non-agenda Items)**

Mr. Mick Blunden from Detroit Edison addressed the Commission regarding the Harbor Beach Power Plant projected dredging project and the subject of open water disposal. Mr. Blunden asked if there was a change in position by the Department and the Commission regarding open water disposal. Open water disposal is regulated by the Department of Environmental Quality and no change has occurred; open water disposal is still not allowed. A solution is being worked on locally.

State Representative Terry Brown welcomed the Commission and staff. Representative Brown represents Huron and Tuscola. There are over a hundred miles of shoreline in his district. It is vital to the local economy to keep the waterways open.

### Minutes

#### **April 18, 2008**

MOTION: Commissioner Bryan Amann moved to approve the minutes of the April 18, 2008 Waterways Commission meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Janet Mansfield and carried unanimously.

#### **June 20, 2008**

MOTION: Commissioner Janet Mansfield moved to approve the minutes of the June 20, 2008 Waterways Commission meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bryan Amann and unanimously approved.

### Old Business

### **Project Status Report**

Mr. Paul Petereson provided an update on harbors as follows:

#### Harbors:

- The plunge pool at Cheboygan Lock and Dam (Cheboygan County) will be refilled on Monday, August 11, 2008. The rest of this project is substantially complete and consists of dam structural repairs, spillway and cribbing repair, buttress repair; and construction of a lamprey trap.
- The Charlevoix Municipal Marina (a GIA facility in Charlevoix County) project is also nearly complete and includes dock construction, a new harbormaster building, seawall/dock connections, utility improvements, and a new parking lot.

Mr. Jordan Byelich provided an update on boating access sites as follows:

Boating Access Sites (BAS):

- The project at the Forks BAS (Cheboygan County) includes ramp construction, parking lot construction, maneuver area construction, grading and drainage, construction of a retaining wall, a vault toilet, and dredging and skid piers. Paving will occur today and tomorrow.
- Dickerson Lake BAS (Montcalm County) is undergoing a project consisting of ramp replacement, parking lot reconstruction, maneuver area reconstruction, vault toilet, and site restoration.
- The completed project at Crystal Lake BAS (Oceana County) included road development, vault toilet, and site restoration.
- The Rondo BAS (Cheboygan County) project consists of barrier fencing on both sides of the Gaylord to Mackinac Trail. There was ORV access and damage through BAS land.
- The Onekama Park BAS (a GIA facility in Manistee County) has completed a project that included jetty construction, a sidewalk, and dredging.
- Completion is expected in early fall for the Kollen Park BAS (a GIA facility in Ottawa County) project, which includes access road construction, sidewalk construction, a new maneuver area, ramp relocation, a new parking lot, and dredging (in progress).

Mr. Bill Boik provided additional information as follows:

- Grindstone City BAS (Huron County) has undergone a dredging project, which included construction of a haul road to assist in mechanical dredging.

New Waterways Facility Updates

- Cross Village Area Harbor (Emmet County)
  - Engineering Services Request process has been initiated.
  - In the fall of winter of 2008, the Feasibility Study is anticipated.
- Eight Point Lake BAS (Clare County)
  - The land purchase was completed in July 2008.
  - Preliminary and final engineering will occur in fall and winter of 2008.
  - The public input process began in 2008 and will continue in 2009.
  - Construction is scheduled for Summer of 2009.
- The Mackinaw City State Dock (Cheboygan County) project is progressing and the pre-construction meeting for Phase III occurred on August 6, 2008. This is the same contractor as the one used for the Forks BAS

(also Cheboygan County). It is expected that the project will finish ahead of schedule.

Mr. Ron Olson provided an update on the Lake Idlewild (Lake County) project. A Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grant has been secured to construct a carry-down launch. A public meeting occurred a few weeks ago and 87 people attended. There is backing from the community leadership to progress and this will be a big step forward toward revitalizing the area.

### **Operations Status Report**

Mr. Harold Herta began his report with a discussion of Central Reservation System (CRS) statistics for boat slip nights. Reservations are down 13.7% as of August 2, 2008. Due to the tough economy and increased price of gas, people are not traveling as frequently but are staying a little bit longer. There may also be increased pressure for seasonal slips

An effort is underway to update land use orders of the Director that relate to boating. In the section that relates to boating there are a number of special land use orders dealing with alcohol bans, dog issues, and parking regulations, along with other items. Staff is in the process of consolidating these land use orders. The public notification process for these rules occurs through the Natural Resources Commission meetings.

There are two bills pending in the legislature. The first one is HB 5839 (sponsored by Representative Elsenheimer). If passed, this bill would eliminate the BAS permit program. There are no co-sponsors for the bill and the Department opposes it. The bill is in Committee and has been since March.

HB 6293 (sponsored by Representative Proos) has a number of co-sponsors. If passed, this bill would establish a \$5,000,000 fund, administered by the Department, to allow counties to apply for loans (50% of the cost with a \$50,000 cap) for dredging activities. While it is a good idea, the Department has concerns including that we do not want to take on the responsibilities of the Army Corps of Engineers. This bill is being reviewed by the Budget and Support Services Division.

### **Standing Committee reports**

The Facility, Operations/Policy, and Boating Access Committee met regarding both variance requests on the agenda. Commissioner Janet Mansfield reviewed the discussion for the other Commissioners present.

### **Strategic Planning Update**

Ms. Vicki Anthes provided an update on the strategic planning process. Goals, objectives, and actions have been disbursed to approximately 22 different committees for review. Around 600 recommendations were received. This

should be in order by the end of September. Chairperson Oakley previously received a copy of the document and requested that it be distributed to the other Commissioners.

#### New Business

Senator James Barcia addressed the Commission to support its assistance in further enhancing the infrastructure in Port Austin. Senator Barcia has recently been assigned the role of chair of the Hunting, Fishing, and Outdoor Recreation Committee. He is looking forward to continuing to work with the Department and the Waterways Commission, particularly in finding solutions during this difficult economic period. Michigan at one time was number one in the country in boater registrations, but has slipped to number two. Water recreation plays a large role in the local economy and Senator Barcia appreciates any assistance the Department and Commission are able to offer to the community. Senator Barcia then pledged to do whatever he can to assist the Department's revenue source.

Commissioner Carol Oakley offered a suggestion for increased revenue. The Waterways program is attempting to accommodate non-motorized boats, such as canoes and kayaks, when construction of BAS occurs. Registration of non-motorized boats would assist to increase revenue for the Department's boating programs. The current waterways budget is derived from motorized boat registration and the gas tax. Senator Barcia also suggested a deposit on water bottles with the stipulation of earmarking a portion of the proceeds for water-related issues.

#### **Port Austin Project**

Former Senator John Pridnia thanked the Commission and staff for holding the meeting in Port Austin and for their work in the Port Austin community. Senator Pridnia was in the legislature for 12 years and he knows what harbors can do for a community. The Port Austin State Dock is an aged facility and has been affected by decreased water levels. The equipment is antiquated including slow gas pumps and poor pump-out service. The number of people visiting is diminishing. The Village of Port Austin is looking for a partnership and is committed to spending \$1,700,000 toward making Port Austin a major recreational harbor and port of refuge. The upcoming new visitor center will move from the present location to enhance the view of the harbor. Former Senator Pridnia hopes the project can begin after Labor Day next year (2009). He additionally would like the construction of floating docks to be a part of the FY 2009-2010 budget. This would allow the facility to be open for business in spring of 2010.

Chairperson Oakley thanked Senator Pridnia for his input. The harbors in the Thumb are excellent ports for safety and recreation.

**Sault Ste. Marie Variance Request**

The Facility, Operations/Policy, and Boating Access Committee recommends acceptance of this request by the Commission. This request is an extension of the variance requests for the George Kemp Marina and the Charles T. Harvey Marina, which expires in 2007. If approved, these items will be extended through 2012.

MOTION: Commissioner Janet Mansfield moved to approve the Sault Ste. Marie variance request. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Amann and unanimously approved.

**Mackinaw City Variance Request**

The Facility, Operations/Policy, and Boating Access Committee recommends acceptance of this request by the Commission. This request allows for a 26 slip expansion (for a total of 52) of seasonal slips beginning with the 2009 season.

MOTION: Commissioner Mansfield moved to approve this variance request. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Amann and carried unanimously.

**Consent Agenda**

Mr. Ron Olson provided the Commission with a review of the concept of a consent agenda. Items placed on the consent agenda may be voted on together. If one member objects, an item can be voted on separately and this can be done without an additional motion.

MOTION: Commissioner Mike Bryanton moved to approve this item. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Amann and unanimously approved.

Other Business:

Mr. Ron Olson stated that an update on Port Austin will be provided to the Commission at the next Waterways Commission meeting. The capital outlay budget for 2008 has not yet been approved.

MOTION: Commissioner Amann moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mansfield and unanimously approved. This meeting of the Michigan State Waterways Commission was adjourned at 12:20p.m.

The next meeting of the Michigan State Waterways Commission is scheduled for Friday, October 3, 2008, in the Lansing area.